



MEMORANDUM

TO: Indiana Superintendents, Principals, and School Improvement Teams

FROM: Shanida Sharp-Byrnes
Diversity Coordinator

DATE: February 11, 2011

SUBJECT: Cultural Competency Update

Indiana Code (IC) 20-31-6 establishes responsibilities for the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and individual schools with regard to cultural competency. This memorandum serves to update you on the department's efforts on this front.

IDOE developed a Cultural Competency Resource and Guidance Document and distributed it to educators statewide last fall. The document aims to assist schools and districts in implementing cultural competency plans. In addition to other requirements of the school improvement planning process, schools must address how they will improve the cultural competency of staff and students. Indiana Code (IC) 20-31-6(2) describes items the school improvement team must consider when writing that component of the plan, including identifying the various groups that make up the student population, include culturally relevant strategies to improve the educational opportunity and performance of each identified group, and recommend areas where professional development is necessary. The guidance document aims to assist schools and districts in implementing cultural competency plans. To review the Cultural Competency Resource and Guidance Document, please visit

http://www.doe.in.gov/accreditation/docs/cultural_competency_guidance_and_resource_document.pdf.

To further support efforts to achieve cultural competency in Indiana schools, IDOE hosted a two-day training with Dr. Roger Cleveland in December for representatives from Indiana's nine Education Service Centers and other community organizations with a special interest in cultural competence (such as the National Council on Educating Black Children and La Plaza), as well as select IDOE staff members. On behalf of the department, I would like to thank training participants for their commitment to supporting local school leaders as they work to implement their cultural competency plans.

I would also like to invite you to join the Cultural Competency community on IDOE's Learning Connection (learningconnection.doe.in.gov) to keep up-to-date on these efforts. The documents from December's training are available on this page, and you will soon find the video and PowerPoint slides from the training as well.

I am excited about the work IDOE is doing to address cultural competency. We will continue to provide guidance and support school corporations as they implement cultural competency plans, which ultimately aim to help all students achieve.

Please contact me at (317) 234-6019 or ssharp@doe.in.gov any time with questions, ideas or concerns. I look forward to working with you.